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REVIEWS

Is America Safe for Democracy? By WILLIAM McDUGAL,
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921. Pp. viii+218.
\$1.75.

The contents of this book were originally delivered as a series of six lectures at the Lowell Institute of Boston, under the title of "Anthropology and History." The position taken amounts to a practical repudiation of psychology and a reliance on eugenics, since the characteristic human traits are due to race and not to culture. The main thesis is stated on page 17.

Every human being and therefore every community . . . inherits from its ancestry a stock of innate qualities which enable it to enjoy, to sustain, and promote a civilization of a certain degree of complexity. As civilization advances, it makes greater demands on these qualities. . . . until it approaches a point at which its complexity outruns the possibilities of the innate quality. At the same time it tends to impair these qualities. . . . Therefore a time comes when the supply no longer equals the demand; that moment is the culminating point of that civilization and of that people, from which the downward plunge begins.

The author is clearly of the opinion that America is in imminent danger of such a catastrophe. In the Preface he says, "As I watch the American people, speeding gaily with invincible optimism down the road to destruction, I seem to be contemplating the greatest tragedy in the history of mankind." The author holds that races have different mental ability, and differ in their instinctive endowments. The chief explanation of racial differences is not to be found in "historical accidents," but in innate differences in certain instinctive endowments. Moreover, the present economic classes in America represent actual differences in mental capacity. Poor people, in America, are inferior mentally to wealthy people, negroes are inferior to whites, and Orientals are inferior to native Americans. The chief reliance for these conclusions is on the psychological tests that were given to the American army. On the basis of these tests, Mr. McDougall asserts that three-fourths

of the population of America are so inferior in ability that they could not complete a high-school education. It may be questioned whether the army tests will bear out these conclusions without further analysis. Certainly it may be questioned whether physicians, as a class, are distinctly inferior in intelligence to army officers of any grade, and yet the results of the army tests do show this. An effort is made to show a correlation between intelligence and moral character, but Dr. Adler has recently tested all the inmates of the penal institutions in Illinois, with the result that they are found to be quite equal in intelligence to the general population as revealed in the army tests.

The author draws some rather sweeping conclusions with regard to the will power of the Americans as compared with the students in colleges in India.

Now the more or less orderly and successful government of the three hundred millions of India by a mere handful of British men during more than a century is one of the most remarkable facts in the history of the world. . . . Observers have frequently expressed the opinion that, as compared with their British rulers, the natives of India are relatively defective in character or will power, and they have found the explanation of British ascendancy in this fact: Now at the very first attempt to apply exact methods in the comparative study of Indians, this opinion finds confirmation.

Upon turning to the "very first attempt to apply exact methods," it appears that the tests were the familiar cancellation tests in which the subject crosses out all the letters of a certain sort. It is quite fair to question whether moral character or strength of will is adequately revealed by quickness and accuracy in crossing out "a's."

A comparison of the Nordic and Mediterranean races is made to account for the differences between the English and the French. This consists in a comparison of the types of art, the rate of suicide, and the frequency of divorce. Nordic art is romantic, with profusion of objects and details, complexity of relations, vagueness of meaning, the suggestion of mystery and so forth. Mediterranean or Southern art is classic, clear, formal, elegant, symmetrical. One needs but to contrast Homer and Virgil with Wordsworth, Shelley, and Carlyle. Later on, it is asserted that the Nordic race is more scientific and produces philosophy, and since the Greeks are credited with both, Mr. McDougall thinks that they were probably or at least partly Nordic. It is to be presumed that the art of the Greeks is the result of the Mediterranean blood, while the science came from the Nordic strain.

The difference between the French and the English is explained by the assumption that the English have much curiosity, little gregariousness, and are introverts. The French have little curiosity, much gregariousness, and are extroverts. On page 84, The Nordic peoples are asserted to have peopled North America and Australia, and the men of the Nordic race are described on page 81 as being taciturn, "taking part in social gatherings only with difficulty and hesitation, content to live alone in the seclusion of the family circle, emerging from it only in response to the call of duty or ambition or war." At least one book has been written in refutation of this statement. It is published in Washington every ten years by the Census bureau.

The difference between the negro and the American is also explained as due to differences in instincts. The negro has the submissive impulse very strong. It may be remarked that a survey of the negro press would fail to reveal any marked expression of this instinct. The Jewish race is different from other races, and McDougall is inclined to think that the Freudian theory is true for them. One good result of the war is that we have broken away from the thralldom of theories of German professors to which the scientific world submitted before. Weissman's theory may not be true, but Professor McDougall has started an experiment which "should eventually give a definite answer to the problem." It is to be hoped that a war with England does not too soon emancipate us from the thralldom to theories of English professors. In the final chapter, it is contended that owing to the effect of the social ladder, gifted people from the lower classes are constantly climbing into the upper classes, where they refuse to breed or so limit the family as to create an alarming scarcity of talent. "Our civilization by reason of its increasing complexity is making constantly increasing demands upon the qualities of its bearers; the qualities of those bearers are diminishing or deteriorating, rather than improving."

There are six appendices, the first of which is very remarkable. It consists of three portraits, Abraham Lincoln, a Borneo Chief, and an Ila-speaking African. Over each picture there is printed, without quotation marks, "All Men Are Created Equal." The effort is doubtless to interpret the Declaration of Independence and not to sneer at it; but the whole procedure is of questionable taste and hardly fair. The picture of the African is indeed repulsive, but in the book from which it is taken there are other pictures of types which might have been chosen if the author had really tried to be fair.

The third appendix suggests a solution of the difficulty, which consists in a state bonus of \$200 a year for each child in families whose income is \$2,000, and so on, in proportion. If the income is below this figure, the stock is inferior and should not be encouraged. It is interesting to wonder whether the instincts of other races or classes might not be changed by financial subsidy.

The book will add nothing to Professor McDougall's reputation. It is sensational, not only in its title, but also in its treatment. It was written too soon after the war for him to be fair to the Germans or just to others. Had Professor McDougall kept in mind the influence of passion on reason, it would have been far better for the good name of psychology. He has no apparent use for sociology; but if this book be psychology, it can offer little if anything to students of social science.

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Primitive Society. By ROBERT H. LOWIE, New York: Boni & Liveright, 1920. Pp. vii+461. \$3.00.

The sociologist who recovers from his first disappointment will find this work interesting and valuable. His disappointment will be due to the limitation which the author has set for himself in the omission of so many topics which the title would lead one to expect, and in which ethnologists as well as sociologists are commonly interested. No discussion of religion appears, nor magic, mythology, or folklore. One looks in vain for a treatment of art or morals or ceremonies. Nothing save in the most incidental fashion is said about music or language; and, in general, psychological questions are left alone.

Had the book been called *Primitive Social Organization* it would have been more accurately named, for the author declares his purpose in the introduction so to limit himself. The topics treated include "Marriage," "Family," "Property," "Rank," "Justice," and the various forms of kinship, fraternal, social, and political groupings.

The point of departure is taken in a criticism of Morgan's *Ancient Society* and the revisions are conclusively made out. In forty-three years so much has been done that it seems hardly worth while spending so much time noticing the arguments which are now no longer put forth. Nevertheless, it is good to have the current views placed in contrast with the older ones.